



Director

Department of the Treasury
Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms
Washington, DC 20226

May 24, 2002

Dear Sir or Madam,

I have the honor to inform you that the United States of America, pursuant to its announcement during the fourth session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Body (INB) on the World Health Organization (WHO) Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC), will be holding an international conference on illicit tobacco trade at the United Nations Headquarters in New York City from July 30 to August 1, 2002. The purpose of the conference is to advance the work of the FCTC concerning the elimination of illicit tobacco trade, thereby, facilitating governments to advance their public health goals.

Two years ago, WHO's 191 Member States began negotiations on the FCTC, a global treaty to address "the spectacular rise and spread of tobacco consumption around the world." Illicit tobacco trade is one of the issues covered by the negotiations. In order to assist the FCTC process, the United States is hosting the International Conference on Illicit Tobacco Trade (ICITT). The United States requests that other WHO Member States designate one or more representatives of their tax administration, customs or other law enforcement agencies to attend the conference.

The conference is open to participation by all Member States. As provided in Resolution 52.18 of the World Health Assembly regarding the FCTC, regional economic integration organizations may participate in and certain other States and organizations are permitted to observe some sessions of this conference. As agreed between the United States of America and the United Nations, nongovernmental organizations and others will be provided access to the conference through the public gallery and in accordance with the

security arrangements determined by the United Nations. As with other inter-sessional consultations related to the FCTC process, the WHO will be assisting the host country in the arrangements for the conference. Accordingly, please inform the WHO, in accordance with the enclosed WHO document, of the representative(s) who have been designated by your country to attend, not later than July 1, 2002. To ensure the timely processing of visas we would recommend that you designate your representative(s) as soon as possible. The designation shall be made by the Head of State, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister of Finance, the Minister of Health or any other appropriate authority and should be sent by email to ICITT@WHO.INT and in writing to Dr Vera da Costa e Silva, Project Manager, Tobacco Free Initiative, World Health Organization, Avenue Appia 20, CH 1211 Geneva 27, Switzerland, or by fax to (41-22) 791 4832.

To facilitate broad participation in this conference, the United States and WHO have given special consideration to securing the participation of delegates from low income and from low middle-income developing countries. The United States and WHO will provide special consideration to a number of nations in accordance with WHO's sponsorship rules for the Fourth Session of the INB. WHO will provide information regarding travel authorization to eligible countries.

To assist the conference organizers in preparing for the conference, you are respectfully requested to complete the enclosed brief questionnaire regarding efforts in your country to combat illicit tobacco trade. Responses should be sent to the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, U.S. Treasury, in care of "ICITT" by fax to 001, 202-927-8488, by July 1, 2002.

An agenda for the conference and a background briefing paper will be sent by WHO to conference participants in the near future and will be posted on the Internet at <http://www.atf.treas.gov/>. WHO will be providing

additional materials regarding registration, travel, and visa arrangements.

Upon the conclusion of the conference, the ICITT will prepare a report to be delivered as a non-paper in the six official languages of the United Nations to the INB at its fifth session October 14-25 2002. It is envisaged that the report will reflect the views expressed at the ICITT and will contain recommendations with respect to effective measures or "best practices" to combat illicit tobacco trade. Of equal importance, the ICITT will enable government officials and specialists with revenue and tax administration, customs, and other law enforcement experience to establish or enhance technical partnerships and coalitions that will facilitate future opportunities for international information exchanges, training, and technical assistance.

The United States looks forward to the active participation of all WHO Member States, other States, and other organizations described above in the International Conference on Illicit Tobacco Trade.

Please accept, Sir or Madam, the assurance of my highest consideration.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Bradley A. Buckles". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Bradley" being more prominent.

Bradley A. Buckles
Director

Enclosure